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AUTHOR Hermann, Margaret G.; Peacock, Greg
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ABSTRACT

All governments or ruling parties contain competing agencies, powerful individuals or small groups that are able to commit government resources to their viewpoint on foreign policy. These configurations make up the ultimate decision unit, whose properties modify the precise character of its government's actions. The first part of this paper defines and classifies the units and conceptualizes their control variables. The second extensively describes each unit: (1) predominant leader; (2) single group; and (3) multiple autonomous groups. The third part describes how to determine the nature of the ultimate decision unit and includes a figure. The fourth part discusses how a unit shapes foreign policy behavior by describing and tabulating a preliminary empirical test of the effects that particular decision units and their associated control variables can have on a government's foreign policy actions. The concluding section reviews the postulates of the three types and points out that the paper's framework allows for comparing and contrasting the decision unit types for analysis. References are appended. (TRS)

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Exploring How Decision Units Shape Foreign Policy Behavior

Margaret G. Hermann
and
Greg Peacock
Mershon Center
Ohio State University

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Who makes foreign policy decisions? What is the effect of the decision unit on the resulting foreign policy? An examination of how governments and ruling parties around the world make foreign policy decision suggests that authority is exercised by an extensive array of different entities. Among the decision units are prime ministers, presidents, politburos, juntas, cabinets, inter-agency groups, coalitions, and parliaments. Moreover, within any one government the pertinent decision units often change with time and issue. When cross-national comparisons of governmental decision-making bodies are contemplated as in the comparative study of foreign policy, the number of possible kinds of decision units becomes formidable.

This paper examines one way of classifying decision units, showing how it enhances our ability to account for governments' behavior in the foreign policy arena. Although we recognize that numerous domestic and international factors can and do influence foreign policy behavior, these influences must be channeled through the political apparatus of a government which identifies, decides, and implements foreign policy. Within that apparatus is a set of authorities with the ability to commit the resources of the society and, with respect to a particular problem, the authority to make a decision that cannot be readily reversed. We call this set of authorities the "ultimate decision unit," even though in reality the unit may consist of multiple separate bodies rather than a single entity. It is our contention that the structure and dynamics of such an ultimate decision unit help shape the substance of foreign policy behavior.

Participants experienced in the foreign policymaking process as well as those involved in decision making in large, complex organizations often remind us of the elusive nature of decision. They point out that in contrast to many theories of decision the actual process of choice may not be a clear, clean occurrence. Instead it may be a gradual, incremental process that transpires

over an extended period without anyone being able to say that "X" made the decision on a given date. They note that those who gather and analyze information supplied to policymakers shape and narrow subsequent options by determining what is passed along and how it is interpreted. Moreover, the implementors of someone else's decision may totally modify the original intent.

It takes nothing away from these important caveats about decision making, however, to ovserve that in the life of every organization actual points of decision do occur, although not always in a fashion visible to all who have participated in the process. Certainly key decisions and those who make them are constrained by available inputs and the subsequent implementation may lead to distortion, but nonetheless choice points do occur with some regularity. Despite the need to recognize that decisions do not always get executed as intended, knowledge of how decisions are made remains a powerful source of insight into what complex entities, such as governments, do.

These same participants in the policymaking process also feel uncomfortable with the requirement of decision theories that all decisions result from a similar process. In the reality of governmental foreign policymaking--as in any entity dealing with numerous different kinds of issues of considerable complexity--we know that a singular approach to all problems is extremely improbable. A contingency approach to decision making is needed that indicates under what conditions decision units will follow one process and under what other conditions alternative specifiable processes probably will be operative. This paper tests such a contingency approach proposing how different kinds of decision units lead to varying types of decision-making processes.

In differentiating decision units, we build upon the growing research about foreign policymaking that focuses on competing bureaucratic

organizations, on small groups, and on powerful individuals. Many analysts have employed notions from bureaucratic politics to explain foreign policy (see, e.g., Allison, 1971; Allison and Szanton, 1976; Brady, 1976; Destler, 1972; Halperin, 1974; Halperin and Kantor, 1973; Neustadt, 1970; Steinbruner, 1974). Interest has also focused on the role that small groups (see, e.g., Anderson, 1986; George, 1980; C. Hermann, 1978; Janis, 1972; Semmel, 1982; Tetlock, 1979) and single leaders (see, e.g., Etheredge, 1978; M. Hermann, 1978, 1980, 1984; Holsti, 1976; Jonsson, 1982; Rosati, 1985; Stuart and Starr, 1981-82; Walker, 1977) play in shaping foreign policy. Most of the work to date, however, has tended to consider each configuration--competing agencies, small groups, or individuals--in isolation without asking when this unit rather than another comes into play and with what consequences for foreign policy behavior.

In this paper we will show that all three types of decision units are relevant to the comparative study of foreign policy. We will suggest a way of determining which type of decision unit is the ultimate decision unit in a particular situation and we will empirically test the effect that the different kinds of units have on governments' foreign policy behavior. The following are the conceptual underpinnings of the arguments in the research to be described.

Definition. At the apex of foreign policy decision making in all governments or ruling parties are a group of actors--the ultimate decision unit--who, if they agree, have both the ability to commit the resources of the government in foreign affairs and the power or authority to prevent other entities within the government from overtly reversing their position. The unit having these two characteristics obviously varies with the nature of the problem. For issues of vital importance to a country, the highest political authorities will be part of this ultimate decision unit. With more routine

problems, the ultimate decision unit may actually be at a much lower level. For technical issues in some governments, the ultimate decision unit will vary depending on the type of problem the government is facing (whether military, economic, scientific, etc.). In governments where policy normally involves mutiple bureaucratic organizations, the problem may be passed among many different units--within one agency, across agencies, or between interagency groups. The basic point, however, remains that eventually for most foreign policy problems, someone finally authorizes a decision and they constitute for that issue the ultimate decision unit.

Classification. A comprehensive set of ultimate decision units can be developed such that one type is applicable in any given foreign policy case. If we postulate that it is always possible in principle to define the set of actors that comprise the ultimate decsion unit with regard to a foreign policy issue, then the task becomes one of describing the relationship among the actors in that set. We believe that the research literature, previously noted, has isolated the major alternative types of ultimate decision units. They are:

1. Predominant Leader--a single individual has the power to make the choice and to stifle opposition;
2. Single Group--a set of interacting individuals, all of whom are members of a single body, have the ability to select a course of action and obtain compliance;
3. Multiple Autonomous Groups--the important actors are members of different groups or coalitions, no one of which by itself has the ability to decide and force compliance on the others; moreover, no overarching body exists in which all the necessary parties are members.

In cases of foreign policy decision making, the actors who can make authoritative decisions for the government should correspond to one of these three configurations. In some countries, the same ultimate decision unit may

prevail in nearly all foreign policy matters; in other countries the unit may change depending on the issue under consideration or the point in time in the evolution of the regime.

Conceptualizing Control Variables. Each kind of ultimate decision unit exists in one of several states or conditions that determines not only the unit's direct effect on the final policy outcome but also the extent to which factors outside the decision unit must be considered in understanding what will happen in the foreign policymaking process. For each type of ultimate decision unit there is a key piece of information that enables the analyst to know when to focus only on the decision unit itself to determine the nature of the foreign policy decision and when there is a need to look outside the unit for the factors that will influence the decision. We call these "key control variables" because the status of these variables determines how other elements enter into the decision calculus for that unit. The key control variables for each of the three types of decision units are as follows:

UNIT	CONTROL VARIABLE	END POINTS
Predominant Leader	Contextual Sensitivity	(A) Insensitive (B) Sensitive
Single Group	Concurrence	(A) Agreement (B) Disagreement
Multiple Autonomous Groups	Relationship Among Groups	(A) Zero-Sum (B) Non-Zero-Sum

The end points for each of the control variables that are labeled "A" above are the conditions in which the primary source of explanation for foreign policy resides in the decision unit itself--the internal dynamics of the unit shape the decision. By contrast, the end points for the control variables that are designated "B" indicate the circumstances in which the unit is penetrable, that is, it is far more susceptible to outside sources of

influence in determining its decision. Thus, we can identify ultimate decision units that are more likely to be self-contained and ultimate decision units that are likely to be externally penetrable for each of the three kinds of units depending on the state of the key control variables. As we shall see in describing the three types of decision units and the key control variables, these alternative conditions lead to different decision-making processes in affecting foreign policy.

THREE TYPES OF ULTIMATE DECISION UNITS

Predominant Leader

When the ultimate decision unit is a predominant leader, a single individual has the power to make the choice for the government. After such a leader's preferences are known, those with differing points of view stop public expression of their own alternative views out of respect for the leader or fear of political reprisals. Even if others are allowed to continue discussing alternatives, their points of view are no longer relevant to the political outcome. The predominant leader decision unit is illustrated by a statement attributed to Abraham Lincoln in a cabinet meeting: "Gentlemen, the vote is 11 to 1 and the 1 has it." Only Lincoln's vote mattered; in this case he was the predominant leader.

In this type of decision unit, the critical set of variables to explaining the decision become the personal characteristics of the predominant leader. The leader's personal characteristics shape his initial inclinations and determine whether and how the leader will regard advice from others, react to information from the external environmnet, and assess the political risks associated with various actions (see M. Hermann, 1978, 1984). Of particular importance in trying to explain a predominant leader's reaction to a foreign

policy problem is knowledge about the leader's orientation to foreign affairs. By orientation to foreign affairs is meant the leader's views about how governments should act in the foreign policy arena. An orientation defines the leader's view of his own nation's and other nations' positions and roles in the world and it presupposes a specific political style in dealing with foreign policy problems (see George, 1979; M. Hermann, 1980, 1986; Rosati, 1985; Walker, 1983). Orientations also indicate how sensitive the leader will be to advice and information from the environment when making a foreign policy decision.

If a leader's orientation indicates that he has a well-defined view of the world and uses his view as a lens through which to select and interpret incoming information, the leader is likely to be looking for cues that confirm his beliefs when making foreign policy decisions. As a result, he will be relatively insensitive to discrepant advice and data. Stoessinger (1979) has called such leaders "crusaders." In effect, the leader selectively uses incoming information to support his predispositions. Such leaders tend to choose advisors who define problems as they do and are generally enthusiastic about the leader's ideas. Libya's Quaddaffi and Cuba's Castro are examples of predominant leaders whose orientations appear to predispose them to be relatively insensitive to the variety of information in their external environments. By knowing the foreign affairs orientations of these two leaders, we have clues about what their governments will do in their foreign policy activities--e.g., whom they are likely to confront, what problems they are likely to attend to, how much of their resources they are likely to commit to dealing with a problem or an opportunity. In short, we only have to know what the leader is like to be able to explain his government's foreign policy behavior.

If, however, the leader's orientation leads him to be sensitive to others' opinions and incoming information, we will need to know something about the environment in which the predominant leader is operating to say what the government is likely to do. Because such leaders are more "pragmatic," our analysis must take into account the context in which the leader finds himself. The sensitive leader will want to ascertain where others stand with regard to the problem and to consider how other governments are likely to act before making a decision. China's Chou En-lai and Zambia's Kaunda are examples of this type of leader. Knowing the orientations of leaders like these two will provide us with clues about what part of the environment will be most influential on the leader, but we must still learn about that part of the environment to understand what the leader will do.

In sum, when the ultimate decision unit is a predominant leader, the key question we must ask in ascertaining how important the leader's personality will be in determining his government's foreign policy behavior is whether or not the leader's orientation to foreign affairs leads him to be relatively sensitive or insensitive to information from the political environment. If the leader is relatively insensitive, knowledge about the leader's personality will provide us with cues about what his government's foreign policy behavior is likely to be. If the leader is more sensitive, we will have to find out information about other aspects of the political system in order to suggest what the government will do in response to a foreign policy problem--personality data will not be enough.

Single Group

When no one individual alone has the ability to routinely determine the position of the government on a class of foreign policy issues--or if such an

individual declines to exercise authority--then an alternative decision unit must operate. The single group represents one option. A single group acts as the decision unit if all the individuals necessary for allocation decisions participate in the group and the group makes decisions through an interactive process among its members.

Single group decision units are frequent in contemporary governments. The Politburo of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, the Standing Committee of the Communist Party in China, the National Security Council in the United States, the cabinet or subcabinet groups in various parliamentary governments illustrate single group decision units. To be the ultimate decision unit a single group does not have to be legally or formally established as an authoritative agent. Instead it must have, in practice, the de facto ability to commit or withhold resources without another unit engaging in the reversal of its decision at will. Moreover, it is not necessary for all group members to concur on every decision of the unit nor to have equal weight in the formation of group decisions. However, if some formal members of the group are never essential to establishing a group decision, then it would be more accurate to recognize the existence of a subgroup that excludes such persons.

When the ultimate decision unit for a particular foreign policy problem is a single group, the analyst must determine if the group can achieve a prompt consensus about the disposition of the problem under consideration (see George, 1980; C. Hermann, 1978, 1979; Janis, 1972). If substantial agreement is achieved quickly among the members (that is, typically in the course of one meeting), factors outside the group that can affect the decision are limited. With prompt consensus members of the group do not look elsewhere for either recommendations or support for their positions. As a result, elements outside the group remain excluded from the process. The members reinforce each others' predispositions and feel secure in their collective decision. Should

disagreement persist, however, other aspects of the political system outside the group can become influential. Members of the group become atuned to outside political pressures as they seek supporting information for their positions, reinterpretation of the problem, or ways to resolve the conflict.

We hypothesize that prompt consensus is more likely if the group has certain structure and process characteristics (see C. Hermann, 1979). Consensus is more likely if the information the group receives is from a common source, is shared among groudp members, and is similarly interpreted by members. Consensus is also more likely if the group is small, if members have their primary loyalty to the group, and if power is unequally distributed among group members (that is, there is a strong, but not predominant, leader).

The key to understanding the foreign policy behavior that will be advocated when a single group is the ultimate decision unit is information on the promptness with which the group can achieve consensus. When consensus occurs quickly, we need to learn about the group's internal dynamics in order to say how the group is likely to deal with the foreign policy problem. If, on the other hand, group members have difficulty reaching consensus, we need to ascertain what other aspects of the political system are likely to be drawn into the consensus-building process or are likely to try to affect that process in order to determine what will happen in foreign policymaking.

Multiple Autonomous Groups

It should be evident that another major alternative exists when the ultimate authority in foreign policymaking is neither a single individual nor a single group. In this case we have multiple--two or more--separate groups, none of which can commit the resources of the regime without the support of all or some of the others. To be one of the groups in the set classified as

the ultimate decision unit, a group must be capable of giving or withholding support that when combined with the support (or lack thereof) from other groups is sufficient to determine whether regime resources will be allocated. One group can block another group's initiatives by: (1) using a formal, sometimes constitutionally defined, veto power; (2) threatening to terminate the ruling coalition by withdrawing from it or overthrowing it with force; or (3) withholding part of the resources necessary for action or the approval needed for their use. For a set of multiple autonomous groups to be the ultimate decision unit, the decision cannot involve any superior group or individual that can independently resolve differences existing among the groups or that can reverse any decision the groups reach collectively. Representatives of the multiple autonomous groups can meet, so long as any decision the delegates reach must be approved by each constituent party.

The classic example of a decision unit composed of multiple autonomous groups is the coalition government in a parliamentary system (e.g., those in Fourth Republic France, in Italy during the past two decades, and in Israel under the Labour-Likud coalition). In these governments, cabinets are composed of members from several small parties, none of which has a majority of seats in the parliament. The members of the coalition depend on each other to retain control of the government. This situation gives each party the ability to block policies of the others with the threat of bringing down the government by withdrawing from the coalition.

Ultimate decision units composed of multiple autonomous groups are not limited to parliamentary regimes. In presidential democracies, even with their independent executive, decision making can involve multiple autonomous groups on those issues where the president must receive the approval of the legislature. Multiple autonomous groups as ultimate decision units can also exist in authoritarian regimes (see Perlmutter, 1981). Generally, a stable

authoritarian regime like that in the Soviet Union is characterized by the domiance of one structure--a cohesive, strong Communist party. During certrain periods, however, relations among these structures, or groups, can become unstable with none of the competing groups having dominance--particularly if there are no accepted rules or procedures for allocating or transferring political power. The government takes on the form of an unstable coalition. Such unstable coalitions are commonplace among current Third World regimes, many of which are internally fragmented and continuously threatened by military intervention.

Clearly for a foreign polcy behavior to occur when multiple autonomous groups form the ultimate decision unit, an agreement must be forged among the set of groups involved. And often multiple autonomous groups are unable to reach agreement on any substantively meaningful course of action; they deadlock. Deadlocks result because (by definition) no group has the capacity to act alone on behalf of the regime. One or more groups are always in a position to block the initiatives of the others. Groups may take action on their own (typically in the form of verbal pronouncements), but no coordinated regime foreign policy activity is possible and meaningful actions and commitments are usually postponed.

We do not mean to indicate, however, that deadlock is automatic. The relationship among the multiple autonomous groups determines when deadlock will or will not occur. Groups that have an underlying acceptance of the right of the other groups to exist in the power structure or some formal or informal "rules of the game" for reaching agreement have a better chance of making a decision than those that deny each other's legitimacy and seek every opportunity to keep the others from participating politically. In cases where the groups have granted each other political legitimacy, there is an incentive to interact with one another to resolve the problem. Such groups,

in effect, have a non-zero-sum relationship. For those groups with formal or informal rules of the game, the invocation of the rules provides further reason for the groups to cooperate. The groups whom the rules will not favor in a given instance have added incentive to bargain with the others.

The alternative values of the key control variable when multiple autonomous groups are the ultimate decision unit are revealed by the question: Is the political relationship among the multiple autonomous groups zero-sum or non-zero-sum with respect to recognizing the legitimacy of each group to seek and share power? When the multiple autonomous groups have a zero-sum relationship, they try to destroy each other and see each group benefitting at the other's expense. Usually such groups can do nothing or almost nothing in the foreign policy arena. They tend to engage in verbal behavior that in no way commits the regime to a particular solution of the basic problem or they maintain the status quo. Deadlock is avoided only when an external source with the power to intervene does so and forces agreement on the groups. When multiple autonomous groups, however, have a non-zero-sum relationship, there is a basis for agreement. In order to ascertain the nature of the agreement and their foreign policy behavior, we have to examine the bargaining process among the groups and the nature of any formal or informal rules of the game governing such a process.

DETERMINING THE NATURE OF THE ULTIMATE DECISION UNIT

Having defined three types of possible ultimate decision units, how do we determine which of the three is the ultimate decision unit for a particular government and foreign policy problem? Figure 1 suggests one way of assigning responsibility. The decision tree in Figure 1 examines for a particular foreign policy issue which individuals and groups are likely to have the

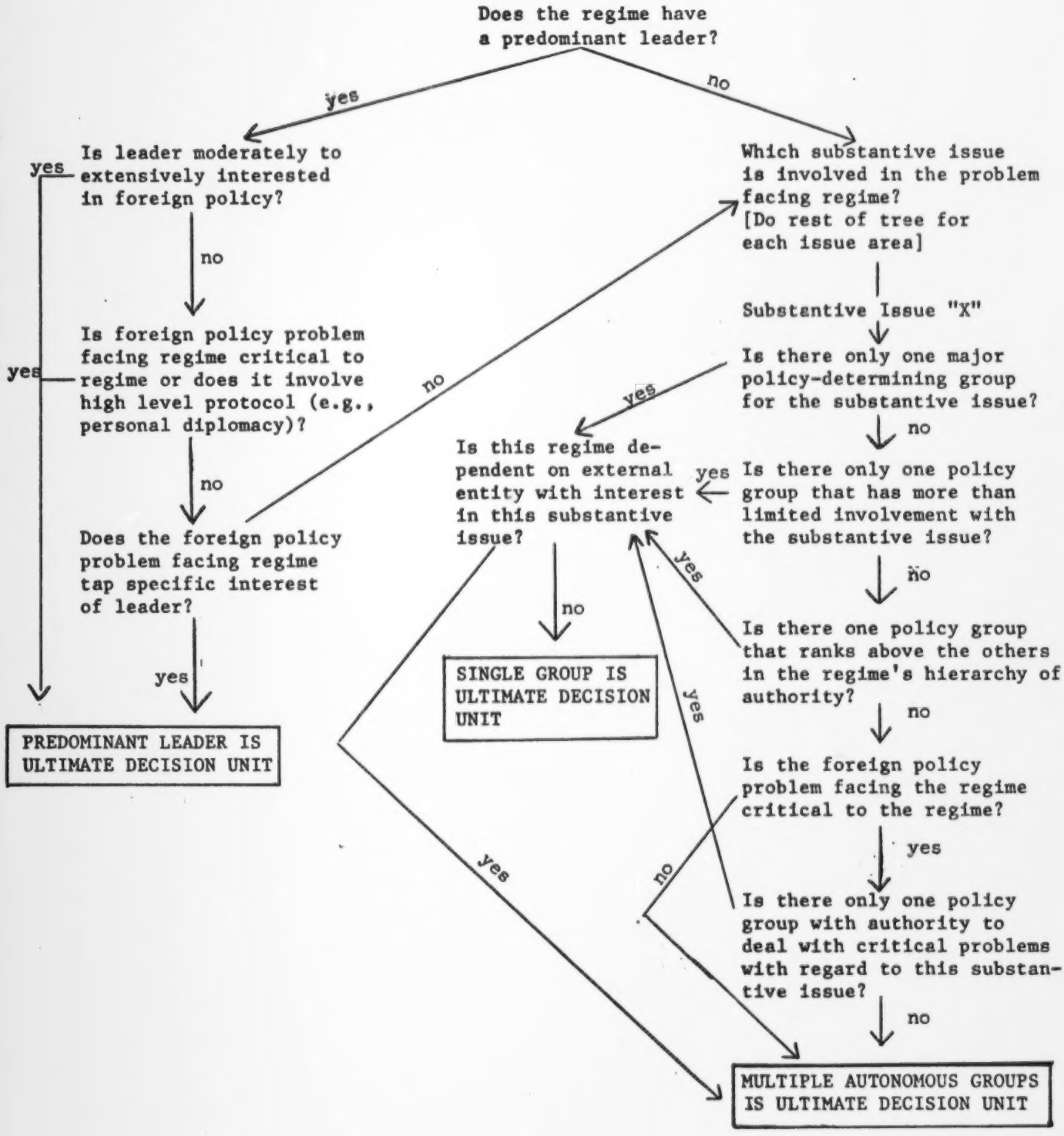
Does the regime have a predominant leader?
yes
no
Is leader moderately to extensively interested in foreign policy?
yes
no
Is foreign policy problem facing regime critical to regime or does it involve high level protocol (e.g., personal diplomacy)?
yes
no
Does the foreign policy problem facing regime tap specific interest of leader?
yes
PREDOMINANT LEADER IS ULTIMATE DECISION UNIT
Which substantive issue is involved in the problem facing regime? [Do rest of tree for each issue area]
Substantive Issue "X"
Is there only one major policy-determining group for the substantive issue?
yes
no
Is there only one policy group that has more than limited involvement with the substantive issue?
yes
no
Is there one policy group that ranks above the others in the regime's hierarchy of authority?
yes
no
Is the foreign policy problem facing the regime critical to the regime?
yes
no
Is there only one policy group with authority to deal with critical problems with regard to this substantive issue?
yes
no
Is this regime dependent on external entity with interest in this substantive issue?
yes
no
SINGLE GROUP IS ULTIMATE DECISION UNIT
MULTIPLE AUTONOMOUS GROUPS IS ULTIMATE DECISION UNIT

Figure 1. Decision Tree for Determining Ultimate Decision Unit.

authority to commit the resources of the nation and the ability to prevent other entities in the government from reversing their decision once made.

Figure 1 can be compared to an apple sorter that divides apples of different sizes into separate bushel baskets. The smaller apples are siphoned off as they pass through the sorter, followed by the medium-sized apples, with the large apples being left at the end of the chute. In Figure 1 the initial questions seek to determine if the ultimate decision unit is a predominant leader; if this is not the case, is the ultimate decision unit a single group; if not, is it multiple autonomous groups.

Even if the regime has a single, powerful leader that would meet the criteria of being a predominant leader, Figure 1 suggests we do not consider such a leader the ultimate decision unit unless he is interested in foreign affairs and thus likely to be heavily involved in determining his government's foreign policy. A predominant leader with little interest in foreign policy is likely to delegate this responsibility to others in his administration. A predominant leader who is relatively disinterested in foreign policymaking may get forced into dealing with certain foreign policy problems, however, if they are critical to keeping his government in power or to his nation's survivial or involve high level protocol such as summit meetings or diplomatic visits. Moreover, although not interested in all facets of diplomacy and foreign policymaking, some predominant leaders have particular foreign policy preoccupations and become the ultimate decision unit when problems arise in these areas. The left-side of the decision tree in Figure 1 indicates these choice points for determining if a predominant leader is the ultimate decision unit.

If we can eliminate the predominant leader as a possibility for the ultimate decision unit, we need to determine if the ultimate decision unit is a single group or multiple autonomous groups. The right-side of Figure 1

helps us differentiate single from multiple groups. Because the departments of government are generally organized along substantive lines, in determining whether the ultimate decision unit is a single or multiple groups we focus on the nature of the problem facing the government. For example, is the problem a military or diplomatic problem, is it a Middle Eastern or East-West problem, does it focus on oil or on intelligence gathering? Once the nature of the problem is specified, we can begin to determine if there is only one or more than one group that generally make policy with regard to that particular issue. We are interested in what group or groups can decide what plans or actions will be used to pursue a policy as well as what human and other resources will be expended in dealing with the foreign policy problem at hand. If more than one group is a policy-determining group, is one of the groups more usually involved in making policy in this issue area than the others or does one of the groups rank above the others in the regime's hierarchy of authority? If we still cannot differentiate among the groups engaged in policymaking for a particular problem, we focus on whether the problem is critical. Since previous research has suggested that critical problems tend to rise to the top in governments and to be dealt with by a small number of people at the apex of an organizational hierarchy (e.g., see C. Hermann, 1972), we often see single groups as ultimate decision units when the problem is critical, multiple autonomous groups when the problem is more routine. If none of these questions differentiates among the groups involved in dealing with the specific problem, the ultimate decision unit includes multiple autonomous groups. If the questions do differentiate among groups, we need to determine if there is any external government or organization on which the nation is dependent who have an interest in the substantive issue and must be consulted in the policymaking process. Is there any colonial power, ally, or regional group that needs to be consulted in reaching a decision with regard

to the substantive issue under consideration? If such is the case, the ultimate decision unit involves multiple autonomous groups; otherwise, a single group is the ultimate decision unit.

Following the decision tree in Figure 1, we have used area experts' judgments about foreign policy units and problems to determine the ultimate decision units for 25 nations in the CREON data set. The experts' judgments were collected by and are described in C. Hermann (1981). The particular nations that we examined and the resulting ultimate decision units are presented in Table 1. Area experts on each of these 25 nations were asked to specify the foreign policymaking units for the nations and the foreign policy issues that faced the nations during the 1959-68 decade. They were then asked a series of questions about the policymaking units with regard to the issues following the items in the decision tree in Figure 1. Moreover, the area experts were asked to indicate if there were any changes in ultimate decision units with a change in regime. In effect, they went through the decision tree for each regime as well as by issue and potential foreign policymaking unit. Disagreements among area experts about responses at any point in the decision tree were resolved through discussion.

HOW ULTIMATE DECISION UNITS SHAPE FOREIGN POLICY BEHAVIOR

To be useful our classification of decision units and associated control variables must lead to insights about foreign policy behavior. In the discussion to follow we will describe a preliminary empirical test of the effects that decision units can have on a government's foreign policy actions. Using the distinction noted earlier between self-contained and externally penetrable decision units, we will examine some hypotheses about how decision units shape foreign policy behavior. Because we had so few multiple

TABLE 1

Ultimate Decision Units for 25 Nations During the Decade 1959-68

Nation	Decision Unit	Years & Issues*
Canada	Cabinet (SG)**	59-4/63
	Cabinet (SG)	4/63-4/68
Chile	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SG)	59-11/64
	Frei (PL)	11/64-68
China (PRC)	Standing Committee of the Politburo (SG)	59-8/66
	Cultural Revolutionary Group (SG)	8/66-68
Cuba	Informal Advisory Group to Castro (SG)	59-60
	Castro (PL)	61-68
Czechoslovakia	Politburo (SG)	59-67
	Politburo (SG)	68
Egypt	Nasser (PL)	59-68
France	DeGaulle (PL)	59-68
Ghana	NKrumah (PL)	59-2/66
	National Liberation Council (SG)	2/66-68
India	Nehru (PL)	59-5/64
	Inner Cabinet (SG)	5/64-65
	Inner Cabinet (SG)	66-68
Israel	Ben-Gurion (PL)	59-6/63
	Cabinet (SG)	6/63-68
Kenya	Inner Circle (SG)	12/1963-68 (for economic issues and issues dealing with relations with Western countries)
	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SG)	12/63-68 (for intra-African issues)
Mexico	Mateos (PL)	59-11/64
	Ordaz (PL)	11/64-68
New Zealand	External Minister and Staff (SG)	12/60-64
	External Minister	65-68

Table 1 (continued)

Nation	Decision Unit	Years & Issues
	and Staff (SG)	
Norway	Cabinet and Storting Foreign Affairs Committee (MAG)	59-68
Philippines	Macapagal (PL)	61-65 (for issues dealing with Southeast Asian relations)
	Marcos (PL)	66-68 (for issues dealing with Southeast Asian relations)
	Macapagal & the Americans (MAG)	61-65 (for issues dealing with the economy and East-West alignments)
	Marcos & the Americans (MAG)	66-68 (for issues dealing with the economy and East-West alignments)
Soviet Union	Khrushchev (PL)	59-10/64
	Politburo (SG)	10/64-68
Spain	Franco (PL)	59-68
Switzerland	Federal Council (SG)	59-68 (Foreign Labor)
	Foreign Minister & Advisers (SG)	59-68 (Neutrality, aid, relations with Socialist countries)
	Defense Ministry (SG)	59-68 (for defense Issues)
	Transport Ministry (SG)	59-68 (for issues dealing with international transport)
	Finance Ministry & National Bank (MAG)	59-68 (for issues dealing with international finance)
	Foreign Affairs Ministry, Foreign Trade Section of Department of Economy, & Standing Delegation for Foreign Trade Negotiations (MAG)	59-68 (for issues dealing with EEC and European integration)
Thailand	Thanarat (PL)	59-11/63
	Cabinet & Military High Command (MAG)	11/63-68

Table 1 (continued)

Nation	Decision Unit	Years & Issues
Tunisia	Bourguiba (PL)	59-68
Turkey	Gursel (PL)	5/60-10/61
	Inonu (PL)	11/61-2/65
	Demirel (PL)	10/65-68
Uganda	Obote (PL)	10/63-68
Venezuela	Betancourt (PL)	59-64
	Foreign Minister and Advisers (SG)	65-68
Yugoslavia	Tito (PL)	59-68
Zambia	Kaunda (PL)	10/64-68

⁑ If no issues are listed under the date, the ultimate decision unit is the same across issues for the time period indicated.

⁑⁑ The abbreviations in parentheses stand for Predominant Leader (PL), Single Group (SG), and Multiple Autonomous Groups (MAG)--the three types of possible ultimate decision units.

autonomous groups defined by the area experts for the 25 nations indicated in Table 1, the analysis that follows will focus on the predominant leader and single group ultimate decision units.

In noting the difference between the self-contained and penetrable ultimate decision units, we observed that the internal dynamics of the self-contained unit shape its decision while the penetrable unit is far more susceptible to outside sources of influence in determining its decision. The self-contained unit--the relatively insensitive predominant leader and the single group prone toward prompt consensus--rely on their own beliefs and preferences in shaping what they will do. For the penetrable unit--the relatively sensitive predominant leader and the single group prone toward disagreement--the context in which the decision unit is operating can affect the nature of the decision. External factors outside the decision unit influence what the decision unit will do. The self-contained units are less constrained by the setting in which they find themselves than the penetrable units and, as a result, are likely to engage in more extreme behavior than the penetrable units. The self-contained units are more likely to push their positions on the government, to be less willing to compromise or take incremental steps toward their goals than the penetrable units. They know what should be done in response to the particular problem. The penetrable units, on the other hand, are more responsive to and constrained by what is happening outside the decision unit--by opposition positions, by the need to gather more information, by the changing nature of the situation, by the need to build a consensus or reach a compromise on the issue. Thus, we hypothesize that the self-contained units will be more likely to use instruments other than those of diplomacy in their foreign policy behavior, to engage in conflictual or negative affect behaviors, to commit their resources in the international arena, and to act independently in foreign affairs than the

penetrable units. With their need to reach consensus or compromise, the penetrable units are more likely to focus primarily on diplomacy as the instrument of statecraft, to engage in more actions that display neutral affect, to show reluctance to commit their resources, and to depend on others in the international arena. The rationale for these hypotheses for each of the types of ultimate decision units is developed in more detail in M. Hermann, C. Hermann, and Hagan (1986).

Assessing the Control Variables

Contextual Sensitivity. A predominant leader's score for contextual complexity was determined by combining his scores for conceptual complexity with an indication of the extensiveness of his training in foreign affairs. The measure of conceptual complexity used here is derived from content analyzing press interviews with the predominant leaders and is described in M. Hermann (1980, 1984). Conceptual complexity focuses on an individual's tendency to engage in black/white, either/or thinking and to bend incoming information to fit the rule. More conceptually complex people are found to be more responsive to cues from their environment and to be more likely to monitor their environment for information (see, e.g., Driver, 1977; Nydegger, 1975; Streufert and Streufert, 1978; Ziller et al., 1977).

Because training in foreign affairs suggests the predominant leader's familiarity and expertise in the foreign policy arena and, in turn, his knowledge about what factors are important to consider in making effective policy, training was included in the measure of contextual sensitivity. In determining training, a search was made of biographies and autobiographies as well as reference sources for political positions that the predominant leader had held or was holding that would provide experience in foreign policymaking.

Contextual sensitivity was measured on a four-point scale. A scale point of one indicated that the leader was low in conceptual complexity and in training in foreign affairs and, thus, low in contextual sensitivity. A scale point of two indicated the leader was low in conceptual complexity but high in training in foreign affairs indicating some contextual sensitivity. A scale point of three denoted the leader was high in conceptual complexity but low in training in foreign affairs--again showing some contextual sensitivity. A scale point of four was evidenced by the leader who was high in both conceptual complexity and training and, thus, high in contextual sensitivity. To determine which leaders were high and low on these variables, the scores for the leaders were divided at the mean (see M. Hermann, 1980). Since conceptual complexity was determined to be the more theoretically salient of the two variables to the concept of contextual sensitivity, it was weighted more heavily in differentiating scale points two and three.

Difficulty in Reaching Agreement. In our previous discussion of factors that affect how fast a single group can reach consensus, we noted both structure and process factors. Consensus is more likely if the group is small, members have their primary loyalty to the group, and power is unequally distributed among members; consensus is also more likely if the information the group receives is from a common source, if the core political beliefs of the group are shared and homogeneous, if affective relations among the group are harmonious, if those with disproportionate power in the group tend to resolve disagreements in their favor, and if there is little substantive conflict over the foreign policy issues facing the nation. The potential for disagreement grows as more of these process and structure conditions are not satisfied (see C. Hermann, 1978, 1979).

To determine how much difficulty a single group ultimate decision unit would have in reaching consensus, area experts were asked to answer a series of questions about the foreign policymaking units in the countries they studied. The questions asked for information about group structure and process like that mentioned in the previous paragraph. As there were eight questions and three degrees of possible disagreement for each question, scores could range from eight to twenty-four--eight indicating the possibility for reaching prompt consensus, twenty-four suggesting the likelihood of continuing disagreement. An example of one of the questions may help the reader to understand what was asked and the scoring process. "Were core political beliefs about foreign policy for this foreign policymaking unit: Very homogeneous, partially shared by members, or very heterogeneous?" A response of "very homogeneous" suggested the potential for reaching consensus and was scored a one; a response of "partially shared by members" indicated some potential for disagreement and was scored a two; and a response of "very heterogeneous" posed the potential for much disagreement among the members and was scored a three. The questions the area experts answered are described in more detail in C. Hermann (1981).

Measuring Foreign Policy Behavior

The measures of foreign policy behavior used in this research come from the CREON event data set (C. Hermann, et al., 1973) and are both conceptualized and operationalized in Callahan, Brady, and Hermann (1982). Specifically, the measures used are those of instruments of statecraft, affect, commitment, and independence/interdependence of action. By instruments are meant the skills and resources used in the formation and implementation of foreign policy (see C. Hermann, 1982). In this research, we

will focus on the percentage of a nation's foreign policy behavior that uses diplomatic instruments as opposed to other instruments (e.g., economic, military, propaganda, science/technology). Affect refers to what the policymakers are feeling toward other governments as reflected in what they are saying and doing at the moment (see M. Hermann, et al., 1982). In the CREON data set, affect is measured on a three point scale--negative, neutral, and positive affect. The percentages of each type of affect found in a nation's behavior are the focus in this study. Commitment, as developed by Callahan (1982), centers around the degree to which a government's current actions limit its future options either through the allocation of resources or the generation of expectations in others. The CREON commitment measure is an eleven-point scale ranging from symbolic verbal behaviors to the irreversible allocation of resources and the signing of international agreements. In the present research the mean commitment scale score for a nation across a specified period of time is used to assess commitment.

Independence/interdependence of action focuses on the degree of autonomy a government tries to maintain over its foreign policy actions (see M. Hermann, 1982). In the CREON data set, independence/interdependence of action is assessed on a three-point scale with independence (scale point one) indicated by taking intiatives unilaterally, interdependence (scale point three) by reacting in a multilateral setting, and mixed reactions (scale point two) by unilateral reactions or multilaterial initiatives. The mean score on this scale was used in this research as well as the percentage of events that involved independence of action and the percentage that involved interdependence of action.

Results and Discussion

To examine the hypothesized effects of the control variables and decision units on foreign policy behavior, scores on contextual sensitivity were correlated with the foreign policy behavior measures for the predominant leader ultimate decision units and scores indicating the likelihood of continuing disagreement were correlated with the foreign policy behavior measures for the single group ultimate decision units. The resulting Pearson product moment correlations are reported in Table 2. An examination of the relationships indicates support for most of the hypotheses for both types of ultimate decision units. Only the correlations for positive affect do not

Table 2

Relationships Between Control Variables and Foreign Policy Behavior

Foreign Policy Behavior Measure	Contextual Sensitivity (N=22)	Difficulty in Reaching Agreement (N=22)
Use Diplomatic Instrument (%)	.40**	.60***
Commitment (Mean)	-.39**	-.46**
Neutral Affect (%)	.45**	.77***
Negative Affect (%)	-.50***	-.36**
Positive Affect (%)	.18	.25
Independence/Interdependence of Action (Mean)	.49***	.36**
Independent Actions (%)	-.34*	-.54***
Interdependent Actions (%)	.38**	.58***

*p < .10; **p < .05; ***p < .01

approach significance and are not in the hypothesized direction. The relationships indicate that the more self-contained decision units--the relatively insensitive predominant leader and the single group that can reach prompt consensus--engage in more dramatic and extreme behavior than those decision units that are penetrable--the relatively sensitive predominant leader and the single group that has difficulty reaching agreement. The self-contained ultimate decision units were more likely to use other than diplomatic instruments, to commit their resources or make pledges, to engage in conflictual behavior (negative affect), and to take unilateral initiatives--to act on their own. The opposite were found for the penetrable units; their foreign policy behavior was more constrained. They were more likely to focus on diplomatic maneuvers, not to commit themselves, to seek to control expressions of emotion, and to act with others.

In another place, we (M. Hermann, C. Hermann, and Hagan, 1986) have proposed a set of decision trees indicating what factors are important for each type of self-contained and penetrable ultimate decision unit in determining the foreign policy behavior each will advocate. In this paper we have focused on the more general effects on foreign policy of the control variables--the key pieces of information that alert the analyst to whether one only needs to know something about the ultimate decision unit itself in understanding foreign policy behavior or whether one must take context factors into account. As noted in the discussion here different factors become important depending on whether the ultimate decision unit is penetrable or self-contained. It is possible to develop decision trees for each of the self-contained and penetrable ultimate decision units indicating specific kinds of foreign policy behavior as outputs. Thus, for example, if the ultimate decision unit is a predominant leader who is relatively insensitive, knowledge about his personality and orientation to foreign affairs will enable

us to forecast what kind of foreign policy we would expect him to advocate. If, on the other hand, the predominant leader is relatively sensitive to his political environment, we have to learn more about that environment--is there any opposition to him or his policies among his advisory group, among members of his regime, in politically active groups in his nation; how threatening is the environment to the leader. The sensitive predominant leader monitors the environment to see what groups may perceive themselves affected by the problem and the nature of their reactions. In effect, the sensitive predominant leader seeks a consensus in dealing with the foreign policy problem that has a broad base of support; he protects his position by being constantly aware of the shifting opinions and coalitions among those he is leading within his regime. Thus, for the sensitive predominant leader we need to know something about whom he pays attention to and the strategies he uses to build consensus among these individuals and groups to be able to say something about the foreign policy that is likely to result.

The present study has suggested that whether the decision unit charged with making foreign policy for a government is self-contained or penetrable can influence the nature of the resulting foreign policy. More work is needed to explore what factors in each kind of ultimate decision unit account for these results. What factors inside the self-contained unit and outside the penetrable unit shape the specific foreign policy response. This will be the next step in our examination of the relationship between decision units and foreign policy.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we have argued that at the apex of foreign policymaking in all governments or ruling parties there are a group of actors with the ability

to commit the resources of the government and the power to prevent other entities within the government from reversing their position--the ultimate decision unit. Although this decision unit may change with the nature of the foreign policy problem and across time, how it is structured will shape what a government does in the foreign policy arena. Our proposal is that the decision process in each type of decision unit channels and molds the impact of the wider domestic and international environment on foreign policy behavior. In other words, the ultimate decision unit serves either to "amplify" or "dampen" a government's initial predisposition to act on a foreign policy problem. In effect, the government's definition of internal and external pressures may predispose it to act in a particular manner, but the precise character of its actions will be modified by properties of the ultimate decision unit.

We have postulated that there are three types of ultimate decision units--predominant leaders, single groups, and multiple autonomous groups. Each of these types of ultimate decision units exists in one of several states or conditions that help to determine whether the decision unit directly affects foreign policymaking or whether factors outside the decision unit must be taken into consideration in understanding the decision-making process. By ascertaining which of the three types of decision units is the ultimate decision unit for a particular foreign policy problem and its state or condition, we have shown how an analyst can narrow the range of variables that need to be considered in explaining the nature of the resulting foreign policy behavior.

The framework we have outlined in this research provides some basis for making cross-national comparisons among governmental decision-making bodies. It contains concepts that can be applied to a variety of different types of political systems. And it enables us to put into perspective the extensive

array of different entities within a government that can make foreign policy. Furthermore, the framework gives us a means for comparing and contrasting different types of decision units. In effect, it makes the decision unit a more accessible unit of analysis for the student of comparative foreign policy.

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